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The Democratic Convention

NOW THAT the Democrats have met in Chicago, have adopted a platform, renominated Mr. Roosevelt, and settled the only question not settled in advance—the nomination for the Vice Presidency—it is possible in some fashion to appraise the value of their appeal for the support of the majority of the American people. The decision of the individual voter should be based far more than ordinarily upon that voter's opinion of the merits of the Democratic vice presidential candidate. Regardless of what one may think of Mr. Roosevelt, everyone must grant that his "life expectancy" is far lower than would normally be the case with a candidate for his office. Twelve years as President of the United States must inevitably exact a terrific physical cost. This is not to suggest that Mr. Roosevelt is in bad health, but merely to point out that whatever the state of his health, if he is reelected, there is a larger chance of Mr. Truman serving a portion of the presidential term than would ordinarily be likely. Hence Mr. Truman should be carefully scrutinized.

Americans of every shade of opinion, who are at all acquainted with the work of the Truman Committee, agree that its job has been fairly and honestly done under the chairmanship of the Senator from Missouri. This achievement is greatly to his credit. But there is another side to the ledger. Mr. Truman worked his way up as a regular politician with the blessing of the notorious Prendergast machine. No misfeasance or malfeasance has been charged against him, but the association is unsavory. Although he is not as acceptable to organized labor as Mr. Wallace would have been, apparently he is viewed as a good second-best. Negroes generally are suspicious of him, but since this year's Republican candidates are not particularly acceptable to Negroes either, the net result will probably be a split Negro vote, as usual. Much as one was forced from time to time to disagree with Mr. Wallace, he certainly is a man of more pronounced principles and idealism than is Mr. Truman, and on balance it is regrettable that such a man rarely proves acceptable to political professionals. Yet perhaps Mr. Wallace as President would not be as effective as his friends might like to think. Certainly it would be a sad thing were he to retire completely from public life next January.

To any American who cherishes the political traditions of our country, the worst stumbling block against voting for a continuance of the present Administration lies in the question of the fourth term. On principle we do not like the idea. And yet the present circumstances of the world are so serious that we cannot let adherence to this sort of principle blind our fundamental judgment as to what would best serve the interests of our own country and of the world as a whole. If we feel that there is little difference between the Republican and the Democratic candidates, then the question of the fourth term can be paramount in shaping our decisions. But if we feel that there is a radical difference between the two sets of candidates, then we must judge on the basis of this difference and overcome our antipathy to too long continuance of one man as chief magistrate.

Some observers, notably Mr. Krock of the New York *Times*, seem terribly scandalized that organized labor in the person of Sidney Hillman should have had any influence upon the Democratic Convention. To be so scandalized is to betray fundamental ignorance of how the American party system works. As Walter Lippmann has well pointed out, the genius of this system is to allow all groups within the nation an opportunity to exert their pressure, without ever being in a position totally to dictate the decisions of either party. Thus Mr. Hillman's veto of James Byrnes was counterbalanced by his inability to effect the nomination of Mr. Wallace, and represents a classic example of our political solution of differences within the nation. That Mr. Hillman himself should happen not to be the finest type of labor leader is

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beside the point. Does Mr. Krock suppose that John L. Lewis had no voice whatever in Republican Party councils?

When Mr. Roosevelt reminded the American people of the Republican record after the last war and prior to 1933, he used a powerful argument. Certainly that party in no way covered itself with glory during those years when the present crisis was germinating. If one is to cast a vote for Dewey and Bricker, it must be in the conviction that these men represent a fundamental change in political thinking from old-fashioned Republicanism. On that ground, at least, the Democrats have a clear advantage. Yet there is emerging from the Democratic conduct of this nation's business a kind of imperialism which is vastly dangerous. Perhaps the emergence of this imperialism was inevitable, and is not to be blamed on any political party. Yet the phenomenon remains, and it is uncomfortably linked to the questions of the fourth term and of Mr. Roosevelt's intensely personal party leadership. It likewise does a great deal to cancel the record of useful reform and of foresight in foreign policy which no one can deny to the present Administration.

On balance, and as of the date at which this is written, it would seem that the Republican candidates clearly offer no great improvement over the present incumbents. Yet there is so little sureness in one's present judgment that events themselves will doubtless change many minds—perhaps several times—before election day comes. And certainly this much is true: if there is reason to believe that Republican foreign policy would turn out to be no more than a disguised isolationism, and there is a good deal of reason to think that this is the case, then Mr. Roosevelt's foreign policy, even with its dangers of imperialism, is so clearly to be preferred that one must unqualifiedly hope for his reelection. In the same way, if Republican internal policy is to be dictated by the clamorous exponents of "free enterprise," and is to have merely a veneer of progressiveness, then again the choice is clear. This amounts to saying that during the next three months the burden of proof remains with Mr. Dewey.

More about Bretton Woods

OUR COMMENTS last week on the two institutions set up by the international monetary and financial gathering at Bretton Woods were made on the basis of newspaper reports and previously published plans. Since then the official texts of the instruments setting up the "International Monetary Fund" and the "Bank for Reconstruction and Development" have been made public. These texts tend to reinforce the conclusions we drew last week. The bank looks like a healthy and reasonable development. It is a relatively simple mechanism which can operate without necessarily producing political repercussions. Indeed some such institution will be desperately needed after the war, and it is a real achievement that plans for it should have been drawn in advance.

The fund, however, is something else again. It certainly can have an inflationary effect. Now there is little likelihood that the fund would tend to inflate the American dollar, which, by the way, now becomes the measuring rod for all other currencies. But it might very easily lead to inflation abroad, and thus defeat its own purposes as an agency for stabilizing currencies in the interests of international trade and, ultimately, of peace. But the publication of the document establishing this fund serves to underline an additional objection to it, and one which is potentially far more serious. The fund, by giving control over the currencies of all nations to the present "big three," would in fact give ourselves, Russia and England power to control in very large measure the domestic policies of all the other countries of the globe. This is clearly imperialism, although in its operation it would be more hidden and subtle than outright occupation on the classical model. Already the representatives of the smaller nations are talking about the fund's impairment of their national sovereignties. They are justified in this criticism.

It may be that nothing better can be expected in the world which is rapidly taking shape as Germany begins to show signs of crumbling internally. The big three must necessarily be tempted to work on the assumption that since the greater power will reside with them, the only way to insure peace is for them to use the power which is theirs. Yet such a policy, tempting as it may be, bodes ill for the future. History provides no evidence that power is the best guarantee of peace. And what makes this particular policy doubly dangerous is that although actual power today resides with the big three, the world's potential power resides elsewhere, particularly in Western Europe and in Asia. It is true that France and China, out of a kind of courtesy, are always officially included with the big three. But it must be obvious to everyone that this is no more than courtesy. The only hope we can have is that in the exercise of power the big three will use justice and restraint. But in the light of human history, this must be a tenuous hope indeed. Power corrupts. That is an axiom of human nature. To neglect it is to deceive oneself.

It is of course true that our Congress can nullify everything that has taken place at Bretton Woods by refusing American participation. To do this in the case of the bank would be totally without justification; to do this in the case of the fund would be justifiable only if some substitute stabilizing agency were concurrently suggested. Refusal without qualification in either instance would be criminally irresponsible.

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Obscurantism II

THEY ARE at Woods Hole, Mass., or Peconic, Long Island, New York, or in the Adirondacks, or in Vermont, or, if when they work they work in Chicago or in San Francisco, they are in whatever summer resorts people go to from San Francisco or from Chicago. The intellectuals and the revolutionaries are off playing tennis and swimming. The men who did not like the Darlan deal are off fishing. The men who did not like the Badoglio deal are taking sun baths. The men who are afraid we will make a Darlan-Badoglio deal with some surviving German Marshal are off somewhere in the cool forests or sleeping in haystacks, or reading the classics.

There was a man who used to have a set piece about a messenger who came to a Greek city and awoke the people at dawn, telling them that the fleet had been defeated and that they, who the night before were free, now in the dawn were slaves. That was a piece from the classics. The man who used to speak it in the cafés of the Riviera to anyone who would buy him a drink was a *magna cum laude* from Harvard (in classical philology) and a revolutionary; he earned his living by teaching in a girls' school—to which, dawn after dawn, he would return, climbing through the window, after a night of weeping over the ancient Greeks.

The New York revolutionaries are off on vacation, they will be back writing soon, but even when they are writing they are not so very much closer to action than was the Harvard man.

Governments never take a vacation. The governments manage the war and the armies fighting the war. On the one hand they do this until the war is won and then the time comes, a moment comes, when the winning governments proclaim that the war is won. On the other hand they do this until the war is lost and the time comes, a moment comes, when there are no governments on the losing side and there are no armies taking orders from any governments, and that is the definition of losing a modern war. But almost immediately after, there are governments again.

Except for the most temporary and exceptional circumstances the governments are always there. The presses print the bank notes, the courts sit in judgment, the immigration guards in the ports arrest the man who pretends he is helping to unload bananas from the ship and who is trying to enter the country illegally; the State Departments receive reports from the Ambassadors, the Ministers, the Counselors-of-Legation, the Chargés d'Affaires, the Consuls-General, the Consuls, the Vice-Consuls, and send back notes and mémoires. Heading the governments are liberators, tyrants, elected administrators, figureheads, hereditary monarchs. In all the countries of the world there is the intellectual who writes about his government, and about all other governments, and there is also the man in the rice field, the man fishing through a hole in the northern ice, the man plowing the field; there is also the carpenter, the mechanic, the factory worker, the railroad engineer, the restaurant keeper, the taxi driver. There is the man who worries about what his government is doing, and there is the man who worries only about his work. There is the man who worries about the war that he sees is coming, and then when it comes he worries about how it is being carried out, and then he worries about the peace that the war is supposed to produce. He knows all the principles at stake and he worries about the principles. There is the man who simply fights in the wars because the governments send him into the wars, and, if he comes out of the wars alive, he reenters the peace, any peace, and then, as before, he continues to worry mainly about his work.

He worries about his work and that means his personal affairs, his health, his wife; and that means how he gets to his work in the morning, the book he reads, the savings bank, and now Mary is growing up and it is time she thought about getting married; and that means also that the elm trees spread over the village street in Ohio and that at the corner of the street there is a stand which sells root beer; and that means that when the day is over there is a rocking chair on the porch and you can turn off the radio in the parlor but, if you do not turn it off, you are bound some time to hear Mr. Dewey and Mr. Norman Thomas, and the President talking about the government that America must have, and about the governments other countries have, and then it becomes a question as to whether these governments will leave anyone in peace to worry about his own personal worries.

There is no use dreaming about anarchy. When the moment comes in which they lose the war, the Germans will have anarchy—for a brief and unhappy time—then a government again.

So that everyone has to worry about governments. The revolutionary wants to become the government, and when a man has an idea, as Robespierre and Lenin had an idea, it is quite natural to be a revolutionary and to feel that it is possible to become the government. But today there are no revolutionary ideas. Those of us who do not even pretend to be revolutionaries, but whose personal worries are interminably interfered with by government and the acts of government, want to share in government, desire to determine the acts of government. Even in a democracy this is not easily accomplished. Even in a democracy, sometimes, this seems almost impossible of accomplishment.

Perhaps the only thing to do is to visit the sick.

C. G. PAULDING.

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The Paradox of Freedom

Caprice, the soft pillow, and the rigor of sacrifice

Roger Caillois

THERE ARE fewer persons than one imagines who speak out openly for iniquity and tyranny. Every one of us is certain that counted among these few are his adversaries, since there can be no doubt in his mind that *he,* at least, defends justice and freedom. But the adversary thinks as much—even he who seems to admit or even to counsel minor injustices does so to promote, he is certain, a higher and more veritable equity. It is true that there is no agreement as to the nature of this higher justice, and so there is a basis for dispute, and each of us, aided by our imagination and the persuasive fury of our own polemics, can accuse the other of fighting in defense of an abominable cause. Thus there are some who understand justice to mean a certain conformism to an order which they say is divine, or natural, but in any case irrefutably right—despite its containing and admitting the most apparent, and sometimes the most shocking discrepancies. On the contrary, others affirm that there can be no justice save in pure and simple equality. And there are others who violently deny this, maintaining that justice must not be confused with uniformity, but that to each man must be given his due. Yet those who think in this fashion are in no agreement as to the manner of calculating this just share: some wish it to reward services rendered, some wish it to reward merit, and others take into account only the needs of man. The debate is endless. There is not one of the debaters, however, who does not speak in the name of justice, not one of them who leaves us any possiblity of forgetting, even for an instant, that he does so.

All this is known. But is it equally obvious that it is the same story when we speak of freedom, and that, despite appearances, there are few men who speak ill of freedom? He who favors slavery dreams of strengthening by means of slavery a higher and more fruitful freedom. If he be a philosopher, he will parade an Epictetus freer in his chains than a despot on his throne. If he be an historian, he will ask whether any high degree of culture—the monuments of Greece—can be other than the precious fruit of the leisure of a little number of privileged men who are spared all vulgar worries or harassing toil by the sweat of an enslaved multitude.

Today we see the men of the democracies discovering that the totalitarians are freedom's enemies. What more evident? The censorship, the books forbidden or burned, the concentration camps, the political police—thought is enslaved, the informer is honored, and a whole nation is made to march in step. Is not that enough? Of course it is enough. The fact however must be considered that Hitler's partisans, when they seized the power of the State, sang a hymn in which they proclaimed the coming day when their victory would bring bread and freedom to the German people. They were not being funny, they meant what they said; by freedom they meant their nation's freedom to carry out whatever foreign policy it pleased, which is to say the policy of preparing the conquest of Europe. But I dismiss this highly peculiar conception of freedom: it presupposes that the individual's freedom consists only in his participation in his nation's freedom—which finally is a question of his nation's power and very soon of his nation's superior power. For he will not consider his nation free until other nations are no longer able to limit its ambitions or its arbitrary acts. That conception of freedom is a joke.

The real question, the only question, is that of the citizen's freedom within the State, and not that of the freedom of nations—a freedom which, no doubt advisably, should be limited to their simply being independent. Yet even in this matter of freedom for the citizen there is much to be said, and the possibility of disagreement. Berdyaev tells a rather disturbing story and one worth careful consideration. A young man, he says, a citizen of a country provided with the strictest of dictatorships, was sent to France where he remained for several months. Then he went home. As he took leave of France he was asked what he thought of France. He replied that everything had appeared to him most admirable, but that in France he had felt ill at ease because there was no freedom in France. The remark caused some surprise. France—how could he fail to notice?—was the land, *par excellence,* of freedom. In France everyone spoke and acted as he pleased and no punishment was visited upon him for doing so. Could the young man match such a freedom in his own country?

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The young man furnished further explanation. There was no freedom in France, he said, precisely for the reason that for the French in France nothing was of any consequence; even a change of government was of no consequence. It was clear that nothing could happen in France, and clear, therefore, that no gesture had any meaning since it could not act upon events. No doubt people were free in France, but their freedom had no value or effectiveness, and it ended by resolving itself into a vain flurry of agitation which could produce nothing strong nor lasting. Certainly in his country there was less tolerance, but in compensation everyone possessed the certainty of being able to work toward bringing about something big, and everyone knew that he was contributing toward building a new world, a world which had never been seen before—an unpublished world, a first-edition world. It was only under such conditions that one could speak of life-giving action, and consequently of free action. For freedom is not caprice, it is the possibility of entering into the noble undertaking of changing the face of the world. Freedom is creation or it does not exist.

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I have no difficulty in recognizing what charms this ambitious young man. It is precisely the spirit which aroused the devotion of the best militants of the authoritarian régimes, those workers of the first hour who were led neither by fear nor by self-interest. I understand also what he means by freedom, and that for him freedom is self-dedication and the assumption of responsibility. Without this relinquishment of personal caprice, without this selfless dedication, it is true indeed that freedom can never be more than a sort of sterile and selfish shelter into which a man retreats in order to enjoy in peace the advantages of his condition. Such a freedom conceals an absence of generosity and courage. Rapidly it gives birth to a sordid and desolate world in which all energies rot away, a world moreover which also is decidedly cruel to the poor, for that freedom also includes the right of the rich man not to be dispossessed of what he has. In these circumstances the spirit of profit, of pleasure and of sloth supersedes any spirit of discipline. Soon the absence of any obstacle ends by bringing about a sort of generalized turbulence in which freedom no longer has aim or purpose. Freedom meets no resistance, but for this very reason fails to create. Thus freedom may become a burden, and more than one young man, filled with ardor and impatience, gladly would exchange this deceptive good—rendered unreal by its own excess—for a severe discipline which at least would provide him with the opportunity for real struggle, with the hope of winning after a difficult fight, and above all with that joy, that intoxication which comes to a man who shares in some gigantic enterprise, who knows, however insignificant and weak he may be, that he is responsible for a part of the undertaking's success or failure. Then it is worth while fighting on. Then a man holds on, does his best, reproaches himself for not having done more when he measures what he should have done. That kind of satisfaction is strong meat; it makes all sacrifices seem light, and it repays with tremendous interest that special sacrifice to which a man consents when he surrenders the vain right of being able to act as he pleases—in a void.

Such reasoning is persuasive but it has a counterpart. For after all, in this rigidity, if one makes all things rigid and strict, how can one avoid constraint? And if there be constraint, what can one expect will come out of it that one can desire and esteem? Only when it is freely consented to has this sacrifice of freedom any value. And then also there are too many men for whom the sacrifice of freedom means so little, and costs so little, and who delightedly become accustomed to crawl at the feet of a master if only in exchange they are given a certain number of miserable and unhappy people to oppress. But to proceed. If, as the principal means of governing, one relies upon this evil inclination, if one, so to speak, makes it obligatory, what can one not obtain from the cowards by frightening them, and from the bold by the promise of power? With this system carried to its logical limits, a man seeking to succeed, perhaps seeking only to exist, will have to choose between having no courage or having no scruples. The strains of independence and generosity will ruin utterly those unhappy men unfortunate enough to possess them —henceforth they will be fatal virtues to hold. It will behoove men, rather, to be both servile and harsh; and this sinister conjunction, encouraged by the authorities, will lead to success unfailingly, just as the conjunction of generosity and independence will lead unfailingly to ruin or to death. Even the good that comes from discipline will be vitiated. Instead of educating restless and scattered temperaments, discipline will only sweep into infamy those less capable of resisting threats, or anxious, simply, not to displease. The weakness which under ordinary circumstances would have kept them harmless will carry them headlong into crime as soon as they find themselves placed before the necessity of choosing between being executioners or victims. It happens not unusually that deliberate and doctrinal cruelty ends by producing less disaster and ruin than is wrought by cruelty springing from fear. For when fear and not strength informs cruelty, then it knows neither limit nor check.

Through all the ages of history the dreadful results of constraint are apparent. There are

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too many examples showing the cost of abolishing that freedom which the greater number, assuredly, misuses, but which, at least, forces no one into ignominy, although it is true that through an excessive toleration it permits men to drift easily into ignominy. That is why I do not share the scorn of Berdyaev's young and disdainful hero.

Yet I certainly do not view as a supreme good that inferior freedom in which he refused to recognize the principle of dedication, of effective action and of that fulness which for him meant real freedom. On this point I share his refusal. But I know that no virtue is worth anything when it is enforced, and that it is furthering evil when you constrain men to good. As for myself, I do not see the means of conciliating these two conceptions of freedom. I fear even that they are mutually exclusive, and yet it is necessary to conjugate them, for both the one and the other equally affect the value of any decision, one by forcing the choice, the other by making it without result—so that if you follow either of them too exclusively, you end in tyranny or in mediocrity. I seek in vain those institutions which shall safeguard the independence of the citizen without either weakening his courage or spoiling his awareness of what he owes to the community.

I do not wish in any way to resemble those doctrinaires who, in their admirable zeal, urge for instance a planned economy and its complete subordination to the State, while at the same time they propose that political life shall be entirely free. Dazzled by the advantages in these solutions—they are indeed ideal, each one in its place—they do not ask themselves whether they are mutually compatible—when the problem, precisely, consists in the need to associate them. Perhaps we have reached the point where we must decide in favor of the one or of the other. And also I see clearly that freedom has its value only through a freely accepted duty, and that freedom is truly no more than the condition and the point of departure for this acceptance.

Considered as a soft pillow, freedom does not represent anything respectable, and yet no one can wound freedom without dreadful consequences. I detest despotism and those who proclaim its benefits, yet I have not too great an esteem for those partisans of freedom who have the word forever in their mouth, but who do not seem greatly disposed to sacrifice anything considerable for the thing itself, in such fashion that they seem to love freedom less than their own convenience, and to be unworthy of freedom. I suspect that they would resign themselves easily to tyranny, if tyranny were to leave them their comfort. Furthermore, the way in which some people proclaim themselves the only authentic champions of freedom makes one immediately think that if it were possible they would force all other men to be free, that is to say to live as they themselves live. Despite their language, how is it possible to distinguish such men from apprentice despots?

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I believe that those who have the true vocation of freedom are more discreet. They are jealous of freedom as of the good which permits access to all other goods. If they consent to any obedience, it is because they know that there is no grandeur save in voluntary service. Even when he stands erect, man is not tall. Submission to some high principle raises him above himself. But that submission is never possible without a renunciation which the vulgar mind will always consider an abandonment of freedom. This renunciation however does no more than stop the wastage of an energy which must be gathered together, without loss of any parcel, in order to pursue an undertaking which demands the total energy of man. Then it is that the need of freedom can no longer appear as a simple itch, a simple caprice, an irritating revolt or a selfish claim. Freedom itself clearly is nobility, discipline, faithfulness—and only the best dare seek so severe a law.

Certainly all this applies only to men's souls and to their most disincarnate hopes and cares. The hopes and cares of the world are very different. That is why it is not proper to expect everything of institutions. I was wont to be surprised that they should be so disappointing in this matter of freedom, but their rôle is entirely of this world. They escape excess only by compromise. Their vulgarity, their lack of precision, is inevitable. Fatally they grant too much or too little, turn and turn about favoring the will to power of the State and the individual's appetite for pleasure. How can one expect miracles of their enterprise when it is such a debate that concerns them? They must either be freedom's tomb or the tomb of that which makes freedom's worth.

The paradox remains whole: one must choose freely and yet the choice must mean the dedication of him who chooses, that is to say the choice itself carries with it a risk and the acceptance of a discipline. That being so, freedom is diminished by the act of choice. But this partial sacrifice of freedom is precisely what saves freedom's dignity. It consecrates and exalts freedom, just as constraint from outside destroys freedom, and too great facility degrades freedom. For the fact is that freedom has its value only in its fruits. It is impossible to take freedom as an end in itself, but one must demand freedom as the essential preliminary condition of the steps in perfection by which one will consecrate freedom to the end one seeks. For all wealth is only wealth when it is spent. Who is he who does not know that unless the grain dies it is hopeless to expect a future harvest? But in him who seeks and demands free-

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dom, too often one sees no more than avarice. He watches jealously over freedom, is careful to use freedom only in his own interest or for his pleasure, never consents to spend freedom. He hoards it as if freedom were a material treasure. And thus he thinks that he is conserving freedom intact. He is killing freedom. Worse than that, he is making freedom vile.

Dear Sailor Walsh

An open letter from a Chicago judge

George L. Quilici

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The following open letter by Judge George L. Quilici of the Municipal Court of Chicago was written in answer to an article by a sailor named Walsh which was originally published in* Coronet. Coronet *refused to publish Judge Quilici's answer. It was, however, accepted by a weekly newspaper,* The Lawndale Citizen, *and was later reproduced in the* Federation News *(AFL). We feel it sufficiently eloquent to warrant an even wider audience.*

YOUR ARTICLE addressed to Mr. Striker appeared in the April 4 *Lawndale Citizen* (Chicago) through the courtesy of *The Muncie Press* and *Coronet*. An editor's note gave the rather meager facts that you lived in Muncie, helped your dad run a confectionery store, played basket-ball in school, and that now you are in the navy; that one night in the South Pacific, as entertainment, you were shown a motion picture of a strike back home; that this roused you to write a public letter addressed to labor.

I take it that you are a well-meaning citizen and a good sailor. Whether you have any knowledge of or experience in matters pertaining to labor, industrial relations, wages and living standards is not stated. Nor is anything said as to what you believe we are fighting this war for.

In the last war, as a volunteer, I was in combat service in France. Now, as a judge of the Chicago courts, I am a "white collar worker." My activities as a lawyer and citizen interested in the common good have given me an opportunity to know labor's problems, needs, aspirations and contributions.

Sailor Walsh, I know something about the horrors and carnage of war which you so vividly describe. I believe that you and I are in agreement that our aim should be to prevent the great sacrifices of this war from having been made in vain.

Let me, then, start this way. Occasionally I read that someone in the service has gone AWOL, or committed some serious crime. I do not think that this characterizes the millions of good men in arms. Again, I learn of manufacturers who have defrauded the government or furnished defective materials endangering the lives of our boys. This does not mean to me that they represent any important percentage. Then there are the business men who have chiseled on the OPA, dealt in black markets, and made huge profits. Does this mean that all business men are unpatriotic or dishonest? Not at all.

Well, what about labor? After Pearl Harbor, President Green of the AFL and President Murray of the CIO made a no-strike pledge to our Commander-in-Chief, Franklin D. Roosevelt. In turn, they were promised that the cost of living would be stabilized.

Has organized labor kept its word? The man-hours lost in all war industries for 1943 due to strikes amounted to .016 percent, including the coal strike. In other words, 99.84 percent of all labor remained on the job. Exclusive of the coal strike, the percentage of hours not affected by strikes was 99.94 percent. (You were an athlete; wouldn't you say that this is a good batting average in any league?) For confirmation of the figures write the Department of Labor, Washington.

This record is the best ever achieved in peace or war time, in America, England, or elsewhere.

Understand me, Sailor Walsh, I am against strikes in war-time. Yet labor's non-strike record is so nearly perfect that you and I are not going to "split hairs" about it, are we?

People on picket lines cannot produce anything. Let us, therefore, examine the record of production. Our navy today is five times its strength of December 8, 1941. A miracle of production has been performed in turning out the weapons, material and food for our armies and our allies. We have truly been "the arsenal of democracy." Remember for instance, when President Roosevelt said we would build 60,000 planes. Nearly everyone believed this was just part of the war of nerves; that if it could be done at all, it would require so many years that it would have little

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value in the war. Today we are turning out planes at the rate of 9200 per month (March 1944 figures) or over 110,000 per year! These accomplishments are the result of the back-breaking efforts of the workers in the mills, the mines and the fields.

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I do not want to become dramatic or morbid, Sailor Walsh, but it was you who made me creep with the description of the dead and the wounded. You probably do not know that for our first two war years, 102,000 men and women were killed on war production, over 350,000 were permanently blinded or crippled and 9,500,000 suffered injury in industrial accidents. These figures are several times those of all our casualties on all war fronts. Will you grant that the man who has lost his limbs or his sight in building the ship upon which you serve has also done his full duty to our country?

Further, does it occur to you that the Army and Navy are made up of the workers of America and of their brothers and sons? They are labor! The United Auto and Aircraft Workers (CIO) Union has over one-quarter million of its members in service. You said you were conveying the feelings of "thousands upon thousands" of servicemen. What about the millions upon millions of workers in uniform—did you seek their opinion?

Sailor Walsh, have you given thought to the fact that big business and industry have driven hard bargains with the government, and are making money from the war? Not a rivet has been driven nor a steel plate rolled except for profit. Much of this money has come out of the pockets of workers through stiff income and other taxes.

Meanwhile the Congress enacted a new tax bill which the President vetoed and properly called "a tax bill for the greedy, not the needy." Nevertheless Congress promptly over-rode the veto. (How did your Congressman vote on this—was it for or against you and the workers?) The bill permits big business to keep 5 per cent excess profits in addition to normal profits, while soldiers and workers, you and I, foot the bill.

What else has happened to the war workers? They voluntarily surrendered their right to strike, wages were frozen and many workers forbidden from leaving their jobs.

The spokesmen in Congress of the industrial and agricultural interests prevented adequate teeth being put into the OPA law, appropriated insufficient amounts for its enforcement, and later forced out an able administrator who was doing a conscientious and, under the circumstances, a good job. The result was an increase in the cost of living which the government figures place at 23.4 per cent.

These figures are misleading, for they omit many factors. For example, if an $8 pair of shoes now costs $10, the increase is 25 per cent, if the quality is the same as before and they will wear as long. If a 75 cent meal now costs $1, the increase is 33-1/3 per cent if the quality and quantity of food served is the same. This is true of all cloth, canned goods, clothes, and a thousand other necessities.

Phillip Murray presented a 500 page brief to Congress, prepared by the trained economists and research experts of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, showing that the actual increase in the cost of living since Pearl Harbor is 43 per cent! No one has answered this brief to date. In view of all this, does not labor's 99.94 per cent maintenance of its no-strike pledge seem to you to be an outstanding record of patriotism and sacrifice? Hats off, then, to labor's dead, to the crippled workers and to those who continue to toil and to risk their lives to produce the food, weapons, and equipment for victory.

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And never forget that we are fighting for more than just a military victory. Fascism came to power in Italy by smearing labor and then destroying organized labor completely. The best bulwark against fascism in the post-war world is a strong, healthy, well-led labor movement.

The fascists succeeded in dividing the people and then enslaving them. Only the enemies of America would seek to divide the men in uniform from their fellow Americans. These enemies are the same ones who would turn white against black, Protestant against Catholic, Gentile against Jew, white collar against factory worker, employer against employee, city worker against rural worker, and thereby so divide and confuse us as to endanger the military victory and cause the loss of the peace.

Finally, Sailor Walsh, when demobilization takes place, the returned fighters will have a right to ask for an accounting from those who remained at home. If they should find jobs scarce, real wages low, cost of living high, and labor beaten and demoralized, they would have just cause to say we failed them. If, on the other hand, conditions on the home front have been maintained at a decent level, and the rights of labor have been protected, are not the eleven million soldiers and sailors, including you, who return to their jobs, going to be the real beneficiaries?

Best wishes to all our men in service for a victorious, safe and speedy return to a satisfactory and useful life in the expanding democracy of the post-war world.

P. S. As a resident of Muncie, you should be familiar with the studies of the condition of the industrial workers in your home town, made by Professor and Mrs. Lynd, and published in their two excellent volumes, "Middletown" and "Mid-

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dletown in Transition." You ought to remember that Muncie was chosen as the typical mid-western industrial city. The Lynds gave years of their lives to a scientific and thorough research and recorded their findings and conclusions. The dominant company in your city made millions, contributed to community funds and charities, yet the mass of your working fellow-townsmen lived without security, in stove-heated frame houses, with no running water, electrical refrigeration, or inside plumbing. Perhaps you visited the workers' sections and have first-hand knowledge of their suffering during the late depression? And the fact is that conditions in Muncie are average, and better than in countless cities to which your buddies will return.

Bombs Over America

MICHAEL WILLIAMS

HARRY SYLVESTER'S valuable article, "Mexico and The War," in THE COMMONWEAL for June 30, contained a passing reference to a matter on which I hope Mr. Sylvester may write again more fully, as part of that general discussion of inter-American and inter-national affairs and problems to which his own article, and Edward Skillin's notable study of the disquieting phenomenon of Sinarquism, and other recent articles and letters in THE COMMONWEAL have been such enlightening contributions. For in his opening paragraph Mr. Sylvester quotes a statement made to him by one of the pilots of the US Ferry Command he met in Vera Cruz, who, says Mr. Sylvester, "remembers that here in Vera Cruz fell the first bomb ever dropped from an airplane, and that it fell from an American plane in 1914."

The great majority of American readers, probably, look upon the tremendous and rapidly growing problem of airplane and rocket-gun bombing, in which unknown numbers (probably many hundreds of thousands) of civilian people, men, women, and children, to say nothing about their homes and churches and schools and hospitals and places of employment, have been slain or mutilated, destroyed or desecrated, as an almost exclusively European, or Asiatic, certainly a foreign problem. Of course it now has been forced on our attention, and we certainly are taking a vast, indeed, the chief part in bombing all over the world; nevertheless, the problem itself had, so we generally consider, its origin in other lands than ours; other people, not our people, not ourselves, bear the responsibility for the introduction, if not the development, of the horror of aerial bombardment. For most Americans, then, the striking fact so incidentally referred to by Harry Sylvester, if it is a fact, namely, that the first bomb ever dropped from an airplane fell from an American plane as early as 1914, on American soil, is something that calls either for verification or denial; and which also—and this is the most important thing about it—calls attention to the highly disquieting way in which we Americans as a people failed to realize the significance to ourselves of the business of aerial bombardment when it began (or wherever it began), and of our own responsibility in the matter. That bad habit of ignoring national responsibility, or of trying to do so—for in the long run national responsibilities simply cannot be successfully ignored—is still very strong among our people. As a general name for it, isolation may serve; and that the deep and powerful currents of isolationism which went underground after Pearl Harbor are reappearing again, and will play an important, perhaps an all-important, part in the Presidential election and its results is a fact that only isolationists are likely to deny.

Which opinion brings me back to the incident referred to by Harry Sylvester. As it happens, I am in a position to confirm at least part of the statement made by the aviator in Vera Cruz that the first bomb ever dropped from an airplane upon a city fell from an American plane, on Mexican soil, killing and wounding Mexican women and children (though Mr. Sylvester did not report that fact). But the terrible meaning of the occurrence, its ghastly, ominous warning, its potential consequences and the pressing problem of what to do about it were almost completely ignored.

It was not at Vera Cruz, however, but at Mazatlan, on the Pacific coast of Mexico, early in the summer of 1914, not long before the outbreak of the first World War, that I saw the bomb fall. Of course, it is possible that such an incident also occurred at Vera Cruz, though this is the first thing I ever heard about it, if it did, and I think it more probable that the incident related to Mr. Sylvester was based on the bombing of Mazatlan, which I, as a correspondent for the International News Service, together with other correspondents on the West Coast, reported at the time. The sole reason for recalling that now ancient and almost forgotten episode really resides in the very fact that its terrible meaning was then ignored. It may of course be futile to recall it; but then again it may not be futile to do so. That first bombing airplane cast only a tiny and fleeting shadow at Mazatlan, in 1914, but now over all the world that shadow broods and thickens.

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Terrible, and universal, however, as that shadow may be it is only a part of a still more evil shadow cast by the forerunners of other evil things to come—like the rocket bombs now falling on England. In many laboratories and workrooms are now being incubated new inventions

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and diabolical devices for the employment of ruthless forces and agencies of death and destruction, by means of which even a small and supposedly weak nation or people, or a secret group within a nation, or an international group working among many nations, may utterly frustrate (or try to frustrate) all the best and most practical plans and projects for achieving peace, and maintaining peace, both at home and abroad, which are now being dreamed about, or actually being formed, here and elsewhere in our tortured and bewildered world.

It was not a plane designed for military purposes which dropped the first bomb ever recorded as falling into a city in warfare, in Mazatlan, in Mexico, in 1914. It was a commercial training plane, bought in the United States by General Obregon, the commander of the revolutionary army besieging the Federal Forces still loyal to President Huerta. It was one of the first of the now multitudinous planes which it was our American dream to launch into the heavens in order (so we dreamed) to increase friendly human intercourse and to promote human welfare and cultural interchange and missionary work, to spread Christianity and medical services and the wonderful glories of beneficent Science and the gospel of Progress.

From the deck of the flagship of the American fleet then anchored off Mazatlan, together with Japanese and German and British warships, all observing, and all ready possibly to take a part in the civil warfare on shore, I had often observed Obregon's solitary plane, circling and dipping up and down over Mazatlan, dropping leaflets and pamphlets down to the citizens, calling on them to join the revolution. But even as the original commercial purpose of that plane had been changed into one of revolutionary propaganda, so now propaganda gave way to direct action; the cycle of perversion was accomplished. The Mexican revolutionary aviator took up a bomb instead of a bundle of leaflets and released it where he thought it would fall on a Federal fort about a mile outside the city limits; but the bomb missed its mark by more than a mile, and crashed into the Street of the Carnival, killing or maiming eighteen Mexican women and children. The plane was so high in the air at the time it seemed only one among the innumerable gulls wheeling above the harbor, and the buzzards hovering over the city—in which, less suddenly and bloodily than by the explosion of the bomb, but no less surely, and far more numerously, women and children and older and ailing men were daily dying of starvation, and of diseases speeded in their courses by malnutrition, brought about by the complete blockade of the city. Our own American fleet was taking part in that food-blockade on the seaward side of the city, completing the work of Obregon's besieging army on shore. Officially, of course, we were "neutral"—although prepared to land our marines, if or when the action at Vera Cruz should lead to war with Mexico—but it was an open secret, known to all the correspondents—but kept by censorship from being published—that in reality the military, naval, economic and diplomatic powers of the United States had been thrown into the scales against the Huerta government.

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When the news of the airplane bombing reached the commanders of the international fleet, there was a great commotion, leading to a hurried conference among them, and the despatching of a joint commission of German, Japanese, British and American staff officers to remonstrate with Obregon. It seems that neither the Mexican government, nor, I believe, the American government, had signed whatever international agreements had been reached at the recent Hague Conference attempting to regulate bombing; but despite this lack of legal authority, the joint foreign commission sternly warned the Mexican revolutionary general to desist from further bombings. Obregon, indeed, was himself shocked by the affair, which plainly was accidental, as far as the killing of civilians was concerned; anyhow, that was the end of bombing, for that time, on the West Coast, whatever may have happened at Vera Cruz. And soon the outbreak of the world war caused the Mexican civil war, and our own interest in it, to be submerged. Then we tried our best for some time to isolate ourselves from the war in Europe as well as the troubles in Mexico. Two years later, in 1916, we waged a Presidential campaign under slogans of "Keep out of War"; even as we did only four years ago, in 1940, when again Europe, and now Asia as well, was blazing. And now again after four years of that war, and ourselves in it up to the hilt, a Presidential campaign is to be waged—and again appears the slogan, often disguised, but still seductive and subtle, of isolationism.

It is not for the present writer to attempt to draw the right moral from the lesson, whatever it was, of the bombing at Mazatlan; except, I think, to draw attention to it so that wiser heads may deal with it; and except to affirm, as every individual has the right to do, that personally he believes that isolation is wrong, and can always lead only to evil results if followed in the great crisis now confronting our nation in the coming election. All humanity is under the shadow of bombing planes, which in turn is but the shadow of human science not adequately, which means not ethically, controlled; and only the aroused consciousness of the reality of human brotherhood can be trusted to control that growing power.

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Communications

DON STURZO

Brooklyn, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Don Luigi Sturzo wishes us to convey his deep gratitude to the readers of THE COMMONWEAL who have so kindly responded to our drive for funds to enable him to carry on his work for Christian democracy in Italy.

The members of "People and Freedom"—Americans of Italian Descent Group—wish to add that this drive for funds, which recent events have made more urgent than ever, is still on.

PEOPLE AND FREEDOM,
Americans of Italian Descent Group,
Anthony P. Ullo, Chairman,
2274 81 *Street.*

THE FRENCH QUESTION

Somewhere in France.

TO the Editors: May I draw attention to an error published in your editorial, "The French Question," which appeared in the June 23 issue of THE COMMONWEAL?

This editorial, discussing aspects of our then existing refusal to recognize the functional authority of the Algiers Committee, said in part: "For instance, when these men [the de Gaullists] fear that our armies will bring inflation to France no principles, no politics can serve to excuse our refusal to take their fears into account. We have seen what the immense combined spending power of the highly paid American soldiers meant to the civilian population of North Africa. It seems incredible that we are not taking measures to avoid a repetition of this injustice in France."

The fact is that American troops in France have been strictly enjoined from making any local purchase for individual consumption or use, the object of such prohibition being of course to conserve existing stocks for exclusively civilian consumption and use. Thereby has been established the simplest and most effective possible measure against inflation from the causes editorially described.

Inasmuch as this policy has been effective and enforced since D Day, it is difficult to understand why the press agencies covering operations in this theater have failed, as of June 23 at least, to present this certainly newsworthy aspect of French liberation to the reading public.

SGT. DANIEL P. WARD.

THE ALTAR AND THE WORD

Holy Cross, Ind.

TO the Editors: Sergeant Phillip's defense of Canon Bell's book is gratifying. I may have been a bit rough. But I feel it would be easy to shoot his letter full of holes. The brave sergeant misses the point of my criticisms and picks out quotations after halving them. Isn't it rather naïve to chastise the statesmen for "making" wars and for being at the same time unable to "make valid" peace treaties? As one totally innocent of both activities, has a clergyman the right to ridicule their efforts in such a bitter and superior fashion? What have we done to prevent wars in their causes and to make treaties work? Should we point with our anointed fingers?

I certainly never invited any democratic nation to adopt the attitude of pharisaic pride. If the correspondent will read my review more carefully, he will see that I deplore an attitude, so rampant among the clergy nowadays, exculpating or attenuating the guilt of the aggressors, while very abusive and declamatory of the sins of democracy. The hate, yes hate, of England, Russia, Wall Street, Jews, the New Deal, Mrs. Roosevelt, *et alia,* in certain circles is amazing, almost pathological: Boake Carter, Colonel McCormick and GI Jim are all parts of their mind pattern. Why, there are even some gentlemen who are so blinded by their hate that they still go on canonizing Franco, gloating over the robots, denying Russian victories, etc. I seem to discover a similar tendency in a few statements of Canon Bell's book—not as crude and as stupid, of course, but in its nascent morbidity.

I did not deny that modern man has been enslaved to the juggernaut of industrialism. But I did deny the Canon's implication that there is nothing to relieve the dark picture and that all the forebears of these comparatively happy "slaves" were creative, independent personalities tilling their own fields. When we complain about the bad age in which we have been born we should not lose sight of the fact that there never was a golden age. To castigate our age in the name of the past is as unavailing to salvation as it is unrealistic.

I personally think we live in a comparatively good age wherein fine things are shaping. I think instead of wailing and crying—except over our own personal sins, not the collective sins of our dear contemporaries—we should look for hopeful signs and support every positive symptom. Any other attitude is romantic and leads to frustration.

I am utterly aghast at the new version of Lincoln's famous words. The only remedy for such a mix-up of sphere seems to be Maritain's "True Humanism." The theology behind Sergeant Phillips's last paragraph is certainly not the accepted one, e.g., that of Leo XIII. The sergeant's democracy would consist only of redeemed people; in other words, since nobody can be sure of being redeemed, he relegates government of, by and for the people to Heaven. And in the meantime, a member of an army dedicated for fight against dictatorships, willing to die for its cause, prefers the formula that the "helpless, little, simple folk" want—a good master. I give up!

H. A. REINHOLD.

LONDON COMMENTARY

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Your London correspondent, Mr. J. L. Benvenisti, obviously shares the general British gratitude, hope and confidence in Russia. I trust that this attitude will be warranted by events, but I am of the opinion that we are more likely to establish good relations between the USA and the USSR if we are not blind to facts and if we refrain from using one standard of judgment for German cruelty to Poles and another for Russian. (See, for instance, William Henry Chamberlin's comment

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on Mrs. Cardwell's book "Poland and Russia," advertised in your last issue.)

In particular, I should like to know where Mr. Benvenisti gets his authority for denying that "socialism" in Russia has not meant "handing everything over to government service." So far as I can learn, it has meant just that, especially if one remembers that the Communist Party *is* the government. I should deny that the system is socialism. It is a form of state capitalism which has worked pretty efficiently for the production of heavy material for war, just as the different German form of state capitalism has done.

Mr. Benvenisti joins the chorus of those who believe that the Russian has no political or civil liberty and can be "in general bumped off without much pretense of trial. But he does seem to have a great deal more responsibility than anybody in the democracies. He really does seem to have a say as to how his workshop is to be run."

Now, if this were true, it would be an extraordinary thing. What kind of a dictator would he be who does not think it wise to give in to the ordinary civil rights of his people but who would, nevertheless, give them the right to run the industries upon which the life of the country depends? And what sort of citizens would they be who would exercise such a right competently and fearlessly while they accept a complete lack of political liberty or of ordinary personal security? It is a crazy world but scarcely that crazy.

When I was in Russia in 1937, it was generally agreed that Russian labor unions had two functions. First and foremost, to increase production, and, second, to look after certain social services for their members. They have no say whatever in the selection of management and have no right to strike. The whole development in Russia has been away from the early rights of workers. I refer your readers to the latest authoritative study, published by the Institute of World Affairs, entitled "Management in Russian Industry and Agriculture," by Bienstock, Swarz and Yugow. (Oxford University Press.)

Mr. Benvenisti works himself up to this climax: "Responsibility implies responsibility for failure and the Russian's exceedingly high chances for getting himself liquidated are a kind of tribute to the freedom of action with which he is supposed to be endowed." If that makes any sense at all, it means that a man will feel himself freer and will take more initiative because he knows that he can be punished for an alleged mistake by a wholly arbitrary government. God help British liberty if that is a popular doctrine! By the way, I wonder how Mr. Benvenisti, who seems fond of paradoxes, would explain the other paradox that the disparity of pay in the Russian army is so much greater than in the American army. There has never been a denial of the statement in the New York *Times,* August 23, 1943, that a Russian private got ten roubles a month and a Russian lieutenant one thousand.

The basic fallacy in the position of Mr. Benvenisti, and a great many other well-meaning Americans and Englishmen, lies in their conscious or unconscious assumption that a nation will not be well enough satisfied with its own government to fight a foreign enemy bravely unless it has some kind of democracy. Actually, there are lots of other reasons for relative satisfaction with governments, even when governments are dictatorial. When the Russians were more than half serfs, they fought Napoleon, who probably would have ended serfdom, with incredible gallantry, even as they are now fighting a far worse aggressor who turned on them after first making a quasi-alliance with them.

NORMAN THOMAS.

A CORRECTION

This is an appropriate place to apologize for a typographical error in Mr. Thomas's review of Sumner Welles's "A Time for Decision" (July 28). Mr. Thomas wrote: "If Mr. Welles had had the personal experience of completely amoral communist intrigue that I have had . . ." Unfortunately the word appeared in our columns as "moral."—THE EDITORS.

The Screen

While You Are Gone, Dear

IT WAS inevitable that one of the studios would make the definitive American-home-front movie. And perhaps it was fortunate that David O. Selznick, with his resources, good taste and experienced showmanship, should choose to make it. While *"Since You Went Away"* is not the Opus (with a capital O) that his "Gone With the Wind" was in either story or cinema values, it is still an entertaining picture and certainly the last and longest word on the home scene during an all-out war. There have been others, like "The Human Comedy," "Happy Land" and "Tender Comrade," that showed what Hollywood thought the home folk were doing and thinking about the war and how they were meeting the absence and death of their loved ones; and there are a couple of new films coming up which I have already seen that deal with this subject and particularly with war marriages. But none of these makes an attempt to cover the entire home front with the thoroughness of "Since You Went Away"; and only one, "The Human Comedy," packs the emotional wallop of the Selznick film.

When I read Margaret Buell Wilder's book last summer, I was rather surprised to hear that Selznick had chosen it for a production of large proportions. The book, consisting of a series of letters from a wife to her soldier-husband, has a certain intimate charm and is well packed with details of day-to-day living and plenty of humorous, sentimental reportage on housekeeping, rationing, the problems of two growing daughters and the business of getting jobs to help the family's reduced budget. Producer Selznick, who wrote the screenplay (one of the longest on record), retained most of Mrs. Wilder's details which are of sure-fire appeal to women, increased the ages of the two daughters so Shirley Temple and Jennifer Jones could play the rôles and romance could be introduced, dropped the letter-writing device so the husband could be declared missing in action in the middle of the movie without ending the movie right then and there. He also added several new characters and many new

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incidents some of which are designed to win male audiences and most of which are guaranteed to bring a series of lumps to any audience's throats.

To John Cromwell fell the difficult task of directing the starry cast that Selznick gathered for this portrait of a Mid-West home in 1943. Cromwell rose to the occasion; the film's fine cinema acting is its chief asset. Claudette Colbert, playing her age, gives an outstanding performance of her career as Anne Hilton, the wife and mother. But it is the two actresses who portray the daughters who were most severely put on the spot by this film. Both act up to and exceed expectations. Shirley Temple, in her first important adolescent rôle, is bright, pert and lovable. And Jennifer Jones, who has cause to tremble in her second cinema rôle after winning such acclaim in her first as Bernadette, proves that she can play a modern young girl in her sympathetic portrait of a high school graduate who suddenly comes of age. The film is particularly successful in delineating the relationships of the two sisters to each other and to their mother and absent father. The leading male rôles, while not so exacting, are well handled by Joseph Cotten as the debonair, wise-cracking bachelor friend of the Hiltons who adores Anne and is adored by her daughters, Monty Woolley as the tart, short-tempered colonel who rents the best bedroom and learns to adjust himself to all the Hiltons including their ugly English bulldog, Robert Walker as the colonel's discarded grandson who was kicked out of West Point and is taught by the eldest Hilton girl to believe in himself. The romance that develops between these two is exceedingly touching and is made more so by the lovely photography that reveals their story. A large and well handled supporting cast surrounds the principals. The sole sour note is supplied by Agnes Moorehead; in the rôle of a selfish, mean-spirited hoarder, she is not so much to blame for the exaggerated performance as is the script. Several times Mr. Selznick goes out of his way to call our attention to civilians who are thinking only of themselves and not of the general good or of the war effort. But script and camera always return to the good Hiltons, their devotion to each other, their suffering and their sacrifices.

"Since You Went Away" is dedicated to the "unconquerable fortress, the American home," and I'm sure David Selznick means his picture to be a sermon in consolation. He is telling audiences to forget their own troubles for a while and consider the Hiltons: see how bravely they smile through their tears. So we see the Hiltons at home, at church, at play, at work, and, in several beautifully photographed big scenes, we see them in relation to The People —at the dance in the hangar, in a railroad depot, at the graduation exercises, in the rehabilitation room. I do wish, however, that Selznick had been able to show us all this without quite so much theatrical corn, without so many obvious pulls at our heartstrings. And he could have done the job in considerably less than 2 hours and 51 minutes. My first suggestion at cutting would be from the film's final episode: that cable on Christmas Eve which ends the film on a false note. There are many of us who are of good courage and have strong faith, but who will not receive cables on Christmas Eve telling us our sons or fathers are safe after all. There are other cuts I could suggest—but Showman Selznick knows his business and his business in this case obviously means to include every tear jerking moment from the strains of Brahms' Lullaby at the film's opening to the frequent and repeated goodbye sequences that drip with sobs. "Since You Went Away" is the definitive home-front movie and will continue to be that until a realist comes along to show us what life is really like in America during World War II.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Editors' Choice

WOODROW WILSON. *Gerald W. Johnson, with the collaboration of the Editors of* Look *Magazine. Illustrated. Harper.* $2.00.

AGAINST OBLIVION. *Sheila Birkenhead. Macmillan.* $3.00.

THE SUPER POWERS. *William T. R. Fox. Harcourt.* $2.00.

SIMONE. *Lion Feuchtwanger. Viking.* $2.50.

Photographs and the Past

THIS book about President Wilson starts with Mr. Johnson telling his story in words, with one page of text following another, from the time the man of Versailles was born until he became President of Princeton, and from then on it is pictures which tell the story and take up the full page, and Mr. Johnson confines his remarks to captions at the foot of the pages. So that it is mostly a picture book and one does not have to read the introduction at all. But one should read the pages that are there before the pictures start because these pages deal with Wilson's youth, and it is Wilson's early life which we have all forgotten and it is that early life which explains the public life we all remember. It is curious that we should have to be reminded that Wilson belonged to an American type which always, throughout American history, has been a very admired and admirable American type—that of the serious, conscientious, hard working intellectual who knew that there was training and information to be had through study, and who based all the hopes of a useful career on the theory that a career could be made successful by means of intellectual effort. Not through Dale Carnegie, not through luck; through integrity only, through virtue. There were no cheap moments, no cheap means in the course of Wilson's advance to prominence. That is why one should read Mr. Johnson's introductory pages, before the pictures start. It is useful to be reminded that in the history of the nation there are careers which have started in this way, with a mind working hard and a man's purpose held straight by a firm will toward the excellent, toward the best, with no concessions.

Of course it is the pictures which will sell the book, but it had to be said that Mr. Johnson's text is useful and also that it is very well written. Mr. Johnson says this is how Mr. Wilson came to be what he was, and that is very interesting to us because it is an American story, but of course that is looking back at the past as if we were looking back at the story of any other great American of the past, only Mr. Johnson in his text looks also at the present. Mr. Johnson does not allow us to look at the past and at Mr. Wilson as if he had been President Adams or somebody. He forces us to look at Mr. Wilson as if it were impossible to keep Mr. Wilson in the past. And there are a great many pictures in the book which prevent us from looking at Mr. Wilson as if he had been photographed and now was dead and therefore belonged entirely to the

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past. There is a picture of Mr. Wilson as President of Princeton which is a photograph that belongs to the past. But there are photographs of Mr. Wilson with a lot of generals, of Mr. Wilson with a lot of foreign statesmen, of Mr. Wilson with the Paris crowds, the London crowds, the crowds in Rome, of Mr. Wilson negotiating a peace between this nation and the enemies of this nation. These photographs are not of the past; they are photographs of the present, of the nearing future. Mr. Johnson in his text, and the photographs make it absolutely impossible to keep Mr. Wilson quietly in the past with his ideas and his failure remotely in the past. This book of photographs of a man who is dead is a book photographing the present. It is a disquieting book, a tricky book, and you look at the pictures of Versailles, and there will soon be pictures of Versailles, or of some other place, with statesmen at a table and the German delegation signing the same document or another document and all the officers, the Ambassadors and the civilians looking on, and the crowds outside waiting to watch the celebrities come out—and the world outside, also, waiting to find out what was signed and if it will be possible, this time, to live with some hope.

Moment's Fame

JOSEPH SEVERN is remembered, if at all, because he was the friend who nursed John Keats in his last illness, and in whose arms the poet died. Sheila, Countess of Birkenhead, whose husband is Severn's great grandson, has tried to broaden the picture and present us with the man complete as well as the friend of a dying poet; the title of her most readable and competent book, "Against Oblivion," is drawn from Shelley's preface to "Adonais," in which he refers to Severn and says, "May the unextinguished Spirit of his illustrious friend animate the creations of his pencil, and plead against oblivion for his name!" Unhappily the creations of his pencil—Severn was an artist—are forgotten, and even the present full-length biography, delightful as it is, does not rescue them from the oblivion which they probably deserve.

But the book, like its subject, has great charm, and it certainly serves to freshen the memory of a man who so far has been chiefly a romantic bit of stage property necessary to the romantic deathbed scene of a young genius breathing his last in a foreign land. Severn, like most men on whom fame's light shines brightly for a moment and shifts elsewhere, did a lot of useful and good and amusing things, especially since he lived to be eighty-six, raised a family of children, and ably served his country in public office. His father was a professional musician; indeed the whole family was musical. But young Joseph's greater talent and interest lay in drawing, and since his parents could not afford to give him a formal artistic education, he was early apprenticed to an engraver. At first he was happy; then the tediousness of the tasks to which he was set began to sour and disillusion him entirely. Luckily the man to whom he was apprenticed was not unreasonable. He eased young Severn's work schedule and finally consented to his attending Royal Academy classes.

Here Severn began the process which was to continue all his life: he made friends. That could almost serve as a total explanation of his career. He was possessed of natural charm and gaiety and goodness which attracted people to him until the day of his death. Among these friends was William Haslam, through whom he met the Keats brothers, and once in this circle, he soon got to know the artist Haydon, Leigh Hunt, C. W. Dilke, Shelley, Vincent Novello. Everything went along swimmingly. Severn did well in his art classes and began to get a few commissions; in time he covered himself with glory by winning the first gold medal in painting the Royal Academy had awarded in a dozen years. Then Keats's brother Tom acquired tuberculosis and died of it—probably the source of the poet's own later infection, for he had nursed Tom throughout much of his illness. Keats himself fell ill; the doctors insisted that only residence in a warmer climate would save his life. None of Keats's friends except Severn was free to leave England, and thus Joseph was importuned to go to Rome as the poet's companion. Despite his father's violent opposition, Joseph insisted upon performing what he looked upon as a duty.

After Keats's death, with the help of some of the English colony in Rome, which at that time consisted principally of rich and highborn personages, Severn first obtained a traveling fellowship from the Royal Academy, enabling him to remain in Rome, and then was flooded with commissions, making him more prosperous than he was ever again to be. So he remained there until 1841—over twenty years—courted there a young Scotch woman of distinguished family (married her at Florence under most romantic circumstances), and there began to have a family. During those years Severn achieved a truly unique position in Roman society. His charm again won him friends everywhere. He knew everyone worth knowing among the English visitors and colony; he knew the foreign diplomatic corps as well as scores of Roman and Papal officials; he spoke the Roman dialect.

The return to England was financially a mistake, although it was prompted by altogether natural motives. Severn's style of painting was going out of fashion. Soon the family was in real straits, and had not his eldest daughter, Mary, won considerable success as a water-colorist, things might have turned out very badly. Hence when, in 1861, Severn obtained the British Consulship in Rome, it came as a great relief and solution after long lean years. It is an amazing tribute to Severn's youthfulness that this post was given him at the age of sixty-seven, when the Foreign Office rule forbade such an appointment going to anyone over fifty. He had seemed so young to the officials who interviewed him that they had never suspected the truth; some years later a Vatican dignitary guessed his age to be no more than forty-five.

Severn's task in Rome was particularly delicate. The eleven years of his consulate coincided with the bitter struggle between the Papal Government and the House of Savoy, which by then had united most of Italy and wanted Rome for its logical capital. Severn incredibly succeeded in maintaining his and his country's neutrality while at the same time retaining the complete trust and friendship of both sides. He interceded successfully with the Pope's ministers on behalf of scores of political prisoners; time and again he obtained the withdrawal of decrees of banishment against unwelcome English visitors, who displayed too much sympathy with the cause of a united Italy. During his eleven years in office—throughout many of them he acted as the official agent of the Turin Government—Severn did as much as any man to restrain hatred and to temper passion. When at last, in 1870, Victor Emmanuel's troops marched in, Severn was still the admired friend of both parties. In 1872 he was replaced as Consul; in August 1879, he died, without

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having returned to England, but having lived long enough to see his friend Keats's fame come into fulness.

Three Is Not Always a Crowd

THE YALE INSTITUTE of International Studies seems to have gone in for more works of a controversial nature than is usually associated with such learned endeavors. Samuel Flagg Bemis, for instance, produced under this Yale egis a study of our Latin American policy which was the slickest job of whitewash any exacting patriot could ask. The late Nicholas Spykman in two volumes of the same series, "America's Strategy in World Politics" and "The Geography of the Peace," went so far in his geopolitical ruminations as to intimate that the United States is "encircled." Mr. Fox strikes out for himself, too, and "The Super Powers" is not without its debatable moments.

Much of the book makes good sense. There is a lot to be said for making it plain to all the world that the United States realizes that for strategic reasons we are interested in the maintenance of a strong Britain (England and the Dominions and the Colonies). It is equally sensible to suppose that the more we can wholeheartedly collaborate with Russia, the more she will devote herself to internal problems (for she will then be conscious of less need for expansion for the sake of security—or for interference in the external régimes of other nations). This general approach, of course, does not imply completely underwriting British colonial policies or approving certain acts and plans of the Stalin régime. That the Big Three must come to an agreement as to Germany's status and never permit the Reich to drive any wedge of discord between any of the Big Three are also quite obvious.

Where one wonders is Mr. Fox's suggestion that since the power to enforce decisions resides in the United States, Britain and the USSR, these three should take it upon themselves to settle all major political disputes, or threats to the peace, outside whatever international organization is set up. Another of his arguments for such methods is that Americans would be far more agreeable to collaboration with two allies than they would to committing themselves to the more general sort of international action envisaged in the League of Nations. The author thinks of the new League as primarily a symbol and expresses no confidence that international action against a would-be aggressor would carry with it far more sanction than a joint visitation by the Big Three; he expresses no fear that the supposed interests of the Super Powers might not always coincide with those of mankind as a whole.

Mr. Fox speaks with seeming equanimity of the handing of East Prussia to Poland and of Russia's Baltic ambitions generally. He does not seem to perceive the inconsistency of the USSR insisting on democratic régimes all over Europe. He thinks too much ink is wasted on the problem of providing for peaceful change in the post-war world; henceforth for him only individuals, not nations, will have any legitimate claims in this direction.

Of course it is impossible to propose a blueprint for the peace to which there are not many exceptions. Mr. Fox presents an immediate procedure and disclaims any pretension to providing a formula for permanent peace. He would have, in general, a pretty workable approach provided the functions he assigns to the Big Three were integrated into the coming international organization. Legality has its points.

Minor Parallel

WHEN YOU come to think of it, how seldom it is that a person today can see any real parallel between his own daily round and the life of any of the saints. Not even a man who seeks to follow a favorite or patron saint, if only from afar. The most varied types of humanity have given birth to sanctity—men and women in religious and family life, widows and virgins, fathers and mothers, kings and queens, workingmen, bookkeepers and teachers, young and old, founders of religious orders and simple laymen. Yet Lion Feuchtwanger's story of an orphan, Simone Planchard, who comes to identify herself with Joan of Arc, presents a parallel which must seldom occur in real life in the 1940's.

There is something quite romantic about the way Simone becomes conscious of her great affinity. It was all the work of the ardent patriot, Père Bastide, an old bookbinder devoted to the fifteen-year-old Simone. Among the volumes on which he feeds her growing mind are three volumes about Saint Joan: one "scholarly and somewhat dry"; one "easy to read . . . with many interesting illustrations"; the third "a collection of legends and moving anecdotes." And it is also ascribable to the limitations of her daily routine, circumscribed by the kitchen and the filling station. Only in the privacy of her room could Simone really live.

As the young are supposed to do, Simone dreams the grandest of dreams. She becomes more and more immersed in Joan's struggle to deliver France from the English and to have the Dauphin at Rheims; Simone comes to identify herself more and more with the heroic Maid of Domremy. Yet she has a tempering sense of realism. What was there she, Simone, could do, when France surrenders in 1940 and nazi troops begin pouring in? If she is to act as Joan acted, she must be entirely practical. There is one thing she could do—small in itself perhaps—but an unmistakable blow against the enemies of France. She can make sure that the invader does not get hold of her uncle's trucks and gasoline. Without a quiver she sets his place on fire and blows it up single-handed. Then she returns home to face the consequences. She has acted in the nick of time, as the German troops arrive within a very few hours. The consequences are secondary.

Simone does not flinch. She accepts the punishment from her uncle and great aunt. But for some reason—principally to relieve her uncle's distress—she allows herself to be forced into signing a paper afterward, to the effect that she had acted solely out of spite against her malevolent aunt. A certain parallel with Joan's own recantation. And Simone, like Joan, has a chance to redeem herself in the end.

Lion Feuchtwanger is a skilful raconteur. His previous novels have touched on many things—ancient and modern history, Vienna, Paris, Rome, the Germans. He is an old hand at fiction. Although he develops his new theme rather ably, arousing considerable interest in certain inhabitants of that French town, and achieving a certain emotional power, he is only partially successful in making the psychology and fate of Simone seem plausible. The never articulate fervor that inspires her is a purely secular fervor, with patriotism and her love for Joan as a patriot as her motivation. The book attains certain moments of real human pity; they are the story's high points. Feuchtwanger does not make it completely clear, but both Vichy and the hateful aunt seem to have had a hand in her con-

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demnation to the terrifying Grey House. "Simone" ends on a note of hope.

More Books of the Week

Jacobowsky and the Colonel. Franz Werfel. Viking. $2.00.

BECAUSE of the silence (golden?) of its author, the purpose of this publication remains obscure. However, it has a history which, documented as scrupulously as possible from hearsay, gossip, clippings, jottings, a play-script courteously furnished by the Theater Guild and a steady number of items supplied by Mr. Leonard Lyons—an ubiquitist who frequently complains that he is always quoted though never mentioned—runs something like this: it is the "Original Play," "Jacobowsky and the Colonel," translated from the German of Franz Werfel upon which the "American Play," "Jacobowsky and the Colonel," written by S. N. Behrman, produced by the Theater Guild and Jack H. Skirball, and now performing at the Alvin Theater, is based. (Inhale-Exhale.) A third version of the play by Clifford Odets has been everywhere rumored although never glimpsed; and a recent agnomen to the record, offered by Mr. Lyons, is that of a Mr. Jacobowitz who, having sold the story of his adventures to Mr. Werfel, thereby becoming, evidently, the original hero of the "Original Version," is now writing his own-own account with an eye to the films. As Mr. Behrman's version has already been sold to Columbia for the sum of $325,000, one must consider, I think, Mr. Jacobowitz's effort with terror and aspirin; although conceding certainly his right to his own life—by whomever forever written—*and* the money on the trees. The final fillip (perhaps most interesting of all) will be that the award of "Best Foreign Play" annually offered by the New York Drama Critics Circle was this season earned by Mr. Behrman's "American Play."

Having detailed some of the circumstances surrounding this volume, it would be nice to be able to step inside it and to proceed from there; but it will be obvious (critically) that a sort of zigzag between it and the Alvin Theater will be necessary in order to achieve a review. On the first lap, I will say that I can see no reason why Mr. Werfel's play should be booked while Mr. Behrman's is perambulated on our street. The form of the two versions is exactly the same: the same number of scenes located in the same places. I find the comedy approximate, drawn mainly from the same situations; with honors, perhaps, going to Mr. Behrman for his deftness and lightness, although I do definitely regret his rewriting of the third-act, first-scene tag, one of the best curtains in either the "Original" or the "American" script. A difference largely discussed by my colleagues is Mr. Werfel's introduction, in a small scene, of Saint Francis and the Wandering Jew which has been condemned as a slice of unwieldy symbolism inserted into a comedy. However I thought the scene delightful, if superfluous, and as it was clearly, even humorously motivated, I do not think it can be said to jangle the style.

But it is when one approaches the inner dynamics of the piece that a great discrepancy looms. In my stage review of the Guild production (THE COMMONWEAL, March 31) I find I found Mr. Behrman's comedy *manqué*, complaining that the character of the Polish Colonel—exactly one-half the play—created no plausible opposition to that of Jacobowsky, the gentle Polish Jew of the title; complaining also that in his evaluation of the military aristocrat, Mr. Behrman appeared to substitute a mere code of manners for the quality of faith. And it is astonishing rather than gratifying to open Mr. Werfel's script and to discover there quite how deliberate Mr. Behrman's error becomes. For, while Behrman's Colonel operates from a conception of honor almost wholly dependent upon his wearing a uniform, and upon traditional and useless methods of waging this war; we see Mr. Werfel's soldier operating in addition from a conception of immortality which is far more than a theatrical fact, which is indeed an historical one, and one which should have reared the business into authentic excellence as well as money. Abandoning his uniform (though none of his snobbery) during the first act, as a matter of course, we find Werfel's Colonel (drunk) hurling into his duel with Jacobowsky in this series of speeches: (I delete his rolling r's)

> COLONEL (*Hesitating*): You over-rate the importance of death, Jacobowsky!
>
> JACOBOWSKY: Man has only one life!
>
> COLONEL: Wrong! Man has *two* lives. The Boches cannot harm my *immortal* life!
>
> JACOBOWSKY: But I am attached to my mortal life.
>
> COLONEL: That's just the filthiness of it. . . . Now I know that God would not have made nature so that we can kill each other, if our physical death were a real death.
>
> JACOBOWSKY: A religion for killers!
>
> COLONEL: A religion for noblemen, Jacobowsky! When I die, I live. And that's why I love war and battle, and the mad charge against machine guns with the bare saber, and the intoxication, and the duel. Yes, and that's why I love honor, that splendid feeling that my soul does not have black feet . . .
>
> JACOBOWSKY: You speak of honor and you don't even respect human dignity.
>
> COLONEL: Human dignity is the invention of the little man for the little man. I give you more. From me you get back what Hitler took from you: Honor! (*He hands him one of his revolvers.*)

It will not, I think, be necessary for me in these pages to solicit the aid of the New Testament in order to expose the ideology of this irresponsible and, I will add, abominable and not inaccurately conceived Christian. The man is a character in a play and it is to my purpose to try to discover why he remains unacted, published rather than staged. Unfortunately, it is true that Mr. Werfel has not, in the subsequent scenes, been able wholly to *articulate* his Colonel's ascent into charity and humanity. In the scene in which his decision to save Jacobowsky occurs, the Colonel merely *acts* without explanation, without lines, and in the following scene, the final one, his stated reasons, his conclusions, seem rather too small to fit his mortal change of heart. Large enough for life, yes; for war, yes; for art, no.

It is exactly here, and only here, that I think Mr. Werfel should have been guided to rewrite his "Original." Instead of which Mr. Behrman has rewritten it, cutting the scene quoted above, cutting all evidences and motivation for such a scene, characterizing merely an idealized and determined civilian opposed to a courageous and contemptible soldier in the year 1940, and thereby delivering to us a Broadway "success" which even the publicists regard as partial. The dénouement to both versions is the same: Jacobowsky is saved. And in both versions the little man finally affirms to his opposite, "Our duel is eternal." But Mr. Behrman's duel emerges as little more than a contrived theatrical device, whereas even the reverberations to Mr. Werfel's must have forced, I think, some reexam-

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ination of its cause, without in the least minimizing either its tragedy or its comedy. Here was a play.

And my regret for it is neither small nor temporary nor sympathetic. Certainly in its production, in its published version, in its profits and its future profits, in its publicity, and in the shabby faky fandango surrounding it, while it is safe to assume that everyone has been paid—even doubly paid—the theater has not been served.

KAPPO PHELAN.

Christian Counter-Attack. Hugo Martin, Douglas Newton, H. M. Waddams, R. R. Williams. Scribners. $1.50.

REPRESENTATIVES of true and non-existent underground movements have given us the idea that they are carrying the ball against Hitler all alone. A certain kind of refugee with no contacts whatsoever with church life has been spreading the idea that the churches were stooges of the dictators and less than negligible quantities in the destruction of the evil forces rampant on the continent. They have seen to it that our propaganda ignores—almost entirely—the fact of religion as a positive force working for freedom. It is said that out of seven times twenty-four hours of tireless radio propaganda—to which, according to Thomas Kernan, nobody listens anyway—exactly five minutes, not hours, are given to religious broadcasts. This book does an excellent job by showing that the only true and coherent, well organized and directed opposition is the conscientious opposition of Catholic and Protestant Christians. We hope that it finds many thousand attentive readers. It is based on facts, written with charity and justice, and it breathes an irenic spirit which should prevail among all Christians.

We don't want to quarrel, but we want to register a protest. The question of the 1933 concordat, its value and the motives for its signature on both sides, seems to be misrepresented. The simplification of its very complex antecedents and consequences help make a point—but at the expense of historical truth. One question is: what good are legality, documents and signatures in a fight with a Hitler—especially if they are bought at the expense of a complete demoralization of a besieged army? If the highest moral authority which keeps aloof above national wars puts its solemn signature to a document countersigned by faithless murderers—the best way to explain it is to attribute it to wilful and deliberate misinformation furnished a noble, honest and courageous pontiff! The *ex post facto* justification harms the great Pope's character. But this seems the only major blemish in the book.

H. A. REINHOLD.

The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas. Hans Meyer. Translated by the Reverend Frederic Eckhoff. Herder. $5.00.

THE PRESENT work is a translation of "Thomas von Aquin, Sein System und Seine Geistesgeschichtliche Stellung," by Dr. Hans Meyer, professor of philosophy in the University of Würzburg, published in Germany in 1938. In his foreword (omitted in the translation), Professor Meyer tells us that his aim has been both historical and systematic: to place Thomism in the history of thought and at the same time to consider the thought of Saint Thomas critically in the light of other solutions. Dr. Meyer is evidently not himself a Thomist—he writes "We marvel that Saint Thomas defended the theory [of the real distinction between essence and existence], which is, after all, irreconcilable with the Aristotelian basis of

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the Thomistic system"—but rather a philosophical scholar of somewhat broad and eclectic sympathies.

The book is divided into two parts, the first of some fifty pages devoted to placing Saint Thomas in relation to earlier and later thinkers, the second of nearly five hundred pages which deals with the entire thought of Saint Thomas. The most noteworthy feature of this part is a long section (over three hundred pages) on order in the universe. Under this heading the author treats of sensitive and intellectual knowledge, truth, order among the sciences, ethics and social philosophy, concluding with a brief chapter on the order of salvation.

The main value of this newly translated work is to give the student and general reader a comprehensive study of Saint Thomas's thought. But too much is attempted and the result is not generally successful. In nearly every chapter the author tries to expound the earlier influential views on the topic under discussion, the doctrine of Saint Thomas, and a brief critical estimate. Thus nearly every subject is treated too sketchily and there is little development of central and more important conceptions. For example, the Thomistic doctrine of analogy, regarded by most Thomists of the present day to be of the highest importance for understanding the thought of Saint Thomas as a whole, is allotted only about fifteen pages (and this in a work of over five hundred pages).

The translation omits nearly all of the historical footnotes and many of references to the Thomistic text. Checking at random also showed that some sentences and parts of sentences found in the original are omitted. The English is frequently obscure and awkward in expression. The translation repeats an inconsistency of the original in placing the birth of Saint Thomas in 1226 or 1227 in Chapter 1 and in 1224 or 1225 (the latter is correct) in the appendix. WILLIAM O'MEARA.

St. Dominic and His Work. Pierre Mandonnet, O.P. Herder. $5.00.

PIERRE MANDONNET was a great research scholar, an inspiring teacher, a prolific but unwilling author. In preparation for his cherished idea of a monumental history of Saint Dominic and His Order, he had amassed a treasury of knowledge on the thought, the men, the institutions of the thirteenth century; but when he died, in 1936, only the first chapters had been written. He left his notes and plans for the work to his devoted disciple, Marie Humbert Vicaire, O.P., and Reginald Radner, O.P., who gathered up the finished chapters and fragmentary sketches, amplified his notes and took his dictation. At the request of their dying master, they added copious notes and critical studies of their own which Mandonnet intended to include in the great work.

The result is that we have here, as Archbishop McNicholas says in the introduction, a "a summa of Dominican beginnings" rather than a life of Saint Dominic, or a history of the Order of Preachers. The humility and filial piety of these disciples leaves us somewhat unclear as to how much of the work is Mandonnet's, how much their own. We hardly know who wrote what. We have here their own erudite miscellany of Dominicana. There is little explicit biography of Saint Dominic (five pages out of four hundred and eighty-seven are devoted to his character), except as we see him revealed in his plans and in their results. Religious, not only of the Order of Preachers, but also Augustinians, will find the most valuable contribution of the book in the exhaustive paleographic study of the rules and constitutions of the Order as they emerged from the rule of Saint Augustine. The authenticity, origin and purpose of the rule, the whole subject of Dominican legislation have probably never before been so adequately treated.

The mature lay reader will perhaps find the first chapters, which give Mandonnet's account of Christendom in the thirteenth century, the most interesting ones. He draws a distressing but vivid picture of the Church before the time of Dominic, when preaching was by canon law restricted to bishops, often unworthy, worldly and absent from their sees, an amazing indication of the miraculous continuity of the Church, so uninstructed in an unlettered age. It is a picture that motivates even though it cannot justify the horror and initiative of lay preachers whose enthusiasm so often led to heresy. He describes the deep concern but futile efforts of the papacy to have the Word of God brought to the poor by apostolic preachers. He makes the providential arrival of Saint Dominic abundantly clear. Saint Dominic realized the tragic situation and devoted his zeal and his genius to the organization of a group of holy and learned men who would go on foot, in apostolic poverty, preaching by word and example to those who had left the Church, scandalized by the wealth and wickedness of those who should have inspired them.

Perhaps some day a monumental work on Saint Dominic and the Order of Preachers will really appear. We should look in such a volume for some account of later Dominican personalities—Catherine of Siena, Savonarola, Fra Angelico—but until then we shall find much information and joy in reading this excellent and scholarly account of Dominican beginnings and Christian Europe in the thirteenth century.

The translation by Sister Mary Benedicta Larkin, O.P., is smooth and convincing. It doesn't read like a translated work. The book itself is nicely made. In every sense of the word this is an easy book to hold and to read.

JOHANNA DONIAT.

East of Malta, West of Suez. Bartimeus. Little. $2.50.

WE SAW them off the coast of North Africa, and they were not impressive. It was a small force: one cruiser, a converted merchantman and a screen of two destroyers. They were grimy and weather-beaten, and looked pitifully inadequate before the bristling armada that was closing in for the first landing in French Morocco. But as they swung into line, all hands cheered, for they were part of the British Mediterranean fleet. All knew that the victory, which was only then becoming visible, once hung on a few slender threads; and that one of the most important of these was the Royal Navy in the middle sea.

Its contribution can be simply stated: if it had not been successful in maintaining control of these waters against greatly superior enemy forces, Malta, Suez and Alexandria might have fallen, the campaigns in Abyssinia, Syria and Libya would hardly have been possible, the whole Middle Eastern position would have been endangered and the Axis might have reached the Indian Ocean from the west. If Hitler could supply his forces across the Mediterranean, his success was practically certain; if the British could stop Rommel's supplies, then their victory was assured. What happened was a classic demonstration of Mahan's thesis, proving that his concept of sea power is still valid *in narrow seas,* despite the introduction of radically new weapons.

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This book delineates that contribution. Its significance is not generally appreciated, for the story did not often reach the headlines, and it is not a correspondent's tale, splashed with personalities and color but a sober military record by a recognized expert. It is written with a restraint which is possible only to the English. When one night's work at Taranto gave him control of the sea, the Commander-in-Chief confined his praise to the laconic: "maneuver well executed." The author is equally sparing. Yet only his sober narrative could lend credence to the account of the sinking of the Pola at Matapan, where a fully manned and gunned enemy cruiser surrendered without firing a shot, and a boarding party from a British destroyer found the crew, half in the water, the rest partially drunk on deck. In quiet prose we learn of the parish priest of Senglea who, at the height of the bombing raids on Malta, paced the main street reading his breviary to calm and fortify his flock. Following these many deeds of heroism, we learn the truth that the proper tribute to the brave is to allow the record to speak for itself.

With all its restraint, it is a thrilling book. And it is an important one. For apart from the value of its narrative, it emphasizes the excellence of British seamanship, which has been so amply demonstrated in all theaters. And it stresses the fact that naval warfare is like a tennis match—a slight difference in ability may lead to a widely uneven score.

JOSEPH N. MOODY.

English Prayer Books. Stanley A. Morison. Cambridge—Macmillan. $2.00.

AUGUST 27, 1913, *The Imprint,* edited by F. Ernest Jackson, J. H. Mason, Edward Johnston, and Gerard T. Meynell, included among its contents a short and richly illustrated article, "Notes on Some Liturgical Books," by Stanley A. Morison. It was the author's first public expression of interest in this subject. During the thirty years which have elapsed between that date and the publication of the slender, compact volume, "English Prayer Books: an Introduction to the Literature of Christian Worship," Mr. Morison has achieved for himself a place of eminence among modern typographers and the historians of typography, to say nothing of his fame as historian of the English newspaper. In the current issue of *Liturgical Arts* (May, 1944) as also in that of *Theological Studies* (June, 1944), Father Gerald Ellard, S. J., gives the book the warm commendation it deserves, but the restrained and at times adverse criticism of E. Milner-White (Journal of Theological Studies, January-April, 1944) is not without its value. Every student of the liturgy will be grateful to Mr. Morison for so fine a gift. The "Postscript" is of unusual value and interest. Its first page gives a poignant illustration of the loss of books resulting from modern warfare, a loss which in recent months has extended over a much larger area and grown far more terrible to contemplate.

ANSELM STRITTMATTER.

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